



Victims of the Cassinga Massacre, 4 May 1978: one of two mass graves.

## Massacre at Cassinga. War no more.

Piero Gleijeses has written a lot. The second and last item in this final part of the “Anti-Imperialism, War and Peace” course is an article of his (download linked below) containing this memorable passage:

*‘While Castro’s troops advanced toward Namibia, Cubans, Angolans, South Africans, and Americans were sparring at the negotiating table. For the South Africans and Americans the burning question was: Would the Cuban troops stop at the border? It was to answer this question that President Ronald Reagan’s Assistant Secretary for Africa, Chester Crocker, sought Risquet. “My question is the following,” he told him: “Does Cuba intend to halt the advance of its troops at the border between Namibia and*

*Angola?" Risquet replied, "I have no answer to give you. I can't give you a Meprobamato [a well-known Cuban tranquillizer] – not to you or to the South Africans. ... I have not said whether or not our troops will stop. ... Listen to me, I am not threatening. If I told you that they will not stop, it would be a threat. If I told you that they will stop, I would be giving you a Meprobamato, a Tylenol, and I want neither to threaten you nor to reassure you ... What I have said is that the only way to guarantee [that our troops stop at the border] would be to reach an agreement [on the independence of Namibia]." [15] On August 25, Crocker cabled Secretary of State George Shultz: "Reading the Cubans is yet another art form. They are prepared for both war and peace ... We witness considerable tactical finesse and genuinely creative moves at the table. This occurs against the backdrop of Castro's grandiose bluster and his army's unprecedented projection of power on the ground." [16]'*

War is a terrible thing. War is never a choice for the revolutionaries. We are not pacifists but we do not choose war and we do not choose to be banned or clandestine. We are for peace and for full participation in all democratic forums.

The Cassinga massacre of 4 May, 1978, is now nearly forty years in the past. For some of us it was once an event in our present life, very shocking for us because we had thought that such horrors were already in our past by the time. For others now living, the Cassinga massacre is now so much in the past that it may be a struggle to see what a huge significance this

terrible event had. Please read the attached document.

## **War no more**

Perhaps this reflection, and by extension this entire course, is a way of saying that it falls upon all of us, young and old, to strive politically so that such things do not happen again, and will not require again the militarisation of our struggle, here in Southern Africa.

- The above is to introduce the original reading-text: [The Massacre of Cassinga \[and after\] Piero Gleijeses](#).
- To download any of the CU courses in PDF files [please click here](#).